Appendix G
Community outreach tools — additional information

[This appendix is a modified version of Appendix A from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Environmental Remediation's "Citizen Participation in New York's Hazardous Waste Site Remediation Program: A Guidebook" (June 1998).]

Additional information about several of the community outreach tools discussed in Section 5 of the guidance document is provided in this appendix. These tools are as follows:

Appendix G.1 Contact List
Appendix G.2 Fact Sheet
Appendix G.3 Public Meeting
Appendix G.4 Availability Session
Appendix G.5 Toll-free "800" Numbers
Appendix G.6 Door-to-door Visits
Appendix G.7 Document Repository

The additional information provided for each tool includes the following:

Description — Summarizes what the technique is and what it achieves.

Suggestions for Planning and Conducting — Offers basic ideas to develop and implement the technique successfully.

Benefits and Limitations — Describes specific benefits the technique can help achieve, and potential impediments to its effectiveness.

G.1 Contact List

G.1.1 Description

A contact list contains names, addresses and telephone numbers of individuals and organizations with interest or involvement in the site. They may be affected by or interested in the site, or have information that staff need to make effective remedial decisions. Contact lists typically include residents near the site, elected officials, appropriate federal, state, and local government contacts, local media, organized environmental groups and responsible party, as well as local business, civic and recreational groups.

The site contact list is a critical communications tool that needs to be prepared *before* other activities can be conducted. In some ways, a site-specific citizen participation program will only be as effective as its contact list, which more or less determines who gets the project information prepared, as well as invitations to participate and provide input. Development and revision of the contact list are ongoing activities throughout the site's remediation.

It is recommended that an internal distribution list be developed while preparing the external contact list. The distribution list should include all staff (NYSDEC, NYSDOH, county health department, etc.) involved in the site. This list will help ensure that all staff involved with the project will receive the same information about all phases of the site's remediation.

Note: The checklist on page G-6 will help to identify who may need to be included in a particular site's contact list.

Contact lists are used to

- send a fact sheet announcing a major project decision or proposal, project status or progress, or a public meeting or availability session;
- issue summaries of draft/final documents and announce availability of full documents;
- send a response to public questions and comments;
- transmit a request to the public for information needed by project staff;
- send summaries of information exchanged at public meetings, forums, availability sessions and other public gatherings; and
- identify individuals, groups and organizations by affiliation, interest or geographic location to help to target communication and outreach as appropriate.

G.1.2 Suggestions for Creating an Effective Contact List

Several factors help to determine the size and make up of a site's contact list, including the following:

- the nature and size of the community, whether rural, urban, densely or sparsely populated;
- the nature of hazardous waste contamination, whether confined to an area or environmental medium or more ubiquitous (and thus involving air issues, municipal well contamination, etc.);
- real or perceived impacts of site contamination on the environment, property values, and human health;
- specifics of the proposed remedial solution, especially where there are real or perceived off-site impacts (such as dust, noise, air quality);
- the stage of the remedial process and the specific issues and audiences involved;

- characteristics of the involved audience;
- the information that needs to be exchanged; and
- program resources.

The contact list will change as a remedial program progresses. These changes reflect increasing or declining interest by different individuals, groups and organizations in various aspects of the program.

G.1.2.1 Some categories are a "given" for every contact list

Some individuals, organizations and representatives should be included in *every* contact list:

- those who are directly affected, such as residents, property owners, and commercial establishments next to the site;
- local elected officials (mayors, supervisors, council members, clerks);
- local emergency services officials;
- local media; and
- relevant business, civic, and environmental organizations.

G.1.2.2 Apply criteria to determine who else should be included

Additional individuals, groups and organizations often are included in site contact lists. The following questions about the site will help determine whether the contact list is complete:

- Who has been — or currently is — affected by site contamination, or by investigation and remediation of the site?
- Who *perceives* that he/she has been — or currently is — affected by site contamination or by investigation and remediation of the site?
- Who is likely to be affected or interested as remediation progresses?
- Who has demonstrated past interest — or currently is showing interest — in the site or the remedial process?
- Who may need information about site contamination or the remedial program who is not currently on the contact list?
- Who may have information that project staff needs who is not currently on the contact list?

G.1.2.3 Build upon existing information

For many sites, an initial list of adjacent residents and local officials is developed when the NYSDEC sends classification or reclassification letters, etc. This list can be checked for accuracy and updated as needed. It can serve as a core group for the contact list.

G.1.2.4 Include people who have shown interest

Review project files to identify people who have historically demonstrated interest in the site. Review sign-in sheets from public meetings and availability sessions; include people who have written letters about the site to the state or other party, or who have called project staff or the NYSDEC or NYSDOH's toll-free information numbers.

G.1.2.5 Ask other staff

Ask staff from the state, county or other agencies to share contacts they have had with individuals, groups and organizations affected by or interested in the site.

G.1.2.6 Consult resource people and published lists

Ask municipal clerks and public works department staff (sewer or water system user lists); consult telephone or municipal directories, tax rolls and tax maps.

G.1.2.7 Ask the involved public

Ask the public with whom you are already communicating about the site to identify other individuals and organizations you should include.

G.1.2.8 Monitor media accounts

This includes newspaper, radio and television reports about the site, which often identify individuals and organizations interested in the site.

G.1.2.9 Make use of site visits

Use site visits as an opportunity to evaluate the community from the following points of view: Who is affected? Who is interested?

G.1.2.10 Organize the contact list into categories

This is particularly useful, especially when a list is large. You may need to target specific sub-groups for communication (for example, adjacent residents and local officials). Groups may be categorized based on geography (proximity to the site, political boundaries); by affiliation (unit of government, adjacent residents, environmental civic or business group) or by interest (e.g., remedial alternatives, future site use, off-site impacts, etc.).

G.1.2.11 Key contacts

Consider creating a short list of individuals and organizations likely to play an important participation role, or who need to be notified of project developments on short notice. *It is especially important to keep this list current and accurate.*

G.1.2.12 Update

Review and update the contact list regularly as changes, additions and deletions are obtained. Individuals and organizations may gain or lose interest or change roles in the program at different remedial stages. The need for information from certain members of the public at different stages may also change. A contact person for an organization may change if he or she is an elected official.

G.1.3 Benefits and Limitations

- A contact list helps to identify the affected and interested public, and their affiliations, locations and levels of interest.
- When categorized, a contact list helps project staff to deliver specific information to particular affected and interested individuals, groups and organizations and to plan specific communication activities.
- A contact list helps to inform public directly, without media and others filtering the information.
- A contact list helps to make written and telephone contact with the public systematic and efficient. It gives project staff confidence that affected/interested public is receiving important site information.

- A contact list, particularly a large one, requires staff time to create, update and maintain in useful form. An outdated or deficient contact list is worthless and erodes the effectiveness of the entire site-specific outreach program.

Checklist for Site Contact List

Adjacent/Nearby Affected Parties:

- ❑ Residents/property owners/commercial establishments
- ❑ Owners of rights-of-way (utilities, etc.)
- ❑ Neighborhood association
- ❑ Residents/property owners affected by remedial activity (truck routes, water line extensions)
- ❑ Municipal water suppliers

Local Officials, Committees and Boards:

- ❑ Mayor/supervisor
- ❑ City council/town board members
- ❑ Municipal clerk
- ❑ Planning board/zoning board
- ❑ School boards, officials, PTAs
- ❑ Municipal engineer/public works official
- ❑ Municipal attorney
- ❑ Police/fire/emergency services officials
- ❑ Conservation Advisory Committee

County/Regional Officials, Boards and Organizations:

- ❑ County Administrator
- ❑ County Legislator(s) for site's district
- ❑ County clerk
- ❑ County Health Department
- ❑ Environmental Management Council
- ❑ Soil and Water Conservation District
- ❑ Cooperative Extension
- ❑ Farm Bureau

State Official and Agencies:

- ❑ State senators and Assembly members
- ❑ NYSDEC
- ❑ NYSDOH
- ❑ NYS Department of Law
- ❑ NYS Department of State
- ❑ NYS Department of Transportation
- ❑ Governor's office

Federal Officials and Agencies:

- ❑ U.S. Senators, U.S. Representatives
- ❑ Environmental Protection Agency
- ❑ Occupational Safety and Health Adm.
- ❑ Office of Technology Assessment
- ❑ Department of Defense
- ❑ Department of Energy

Civic/Environmental/Recreational Groups:

- ❑ Outdoor/recreational groups (rod & gun clubs, hiking, biking, boating, birding interests)
- ❑ Local/regional citizens groups
- ❑ Rotary/VFW/American Legion/Lion's Club
- ❑ League of Women Voters
- ❑ Citizens Environmental Coalition, NYPIRG, Audubon, Trout Unlimited, etc.

Economic Interests:

- ❑ Responsible party
- ❑ Title 3 grant recipient
- ❑ Financial institutions/lenders
- ❑ Real estate developers/agencies
- ❑ Chamber of commerce
- ❑ Local economic development board

Local/Regional Media:

- ❑ Newspapers (daily, weekly)
- ❑ Radio and television stations

Geographic-specific Government Bodies and Subdivisions:

- ❑ Community boards established by New York City charter
- ❑ Adirondack Park Agency
- ❑ Tug Hill Plateau Commission
- ❑ New York City Department of Sanitation
- ❑ Adjacent state
- ❑ Canada
- ❑ Native American Nation

G.2 Fact Sheet

G.2.1 Description

A fact sheet is a written summary of important information about a hazardous waste site and its remedial program. It presents information in clear, concise terms for the affected and interested community. It may focus on remedial activities, legal or health issues and citizen participation opportunities.

Fact sheets ensure that site information is distributed consistently and that citizens understand the salient issues associated with the site's remedial program.

A fact sheet is a versatile tool that can be used for many purposes. It can do the following:

- announce a milestone in the site's remedial program or important site findings;
- describe major changes in the type, scope or schedule or previously announced site program activities;
- provide a "status report" during long periods of investigation or remedial construction;
- describe results or remediation efforts;
- announce availability of a document;
- publicize a public comment period or other opportunities for public input;
- announce an upcoming public meeting or availability session;
- supplement or follow up door-to-door visits; and
- complement presentations at a public meeting.

G.2.2 Suggestions for Creating a Fact Sheet

Preparation of a fact sheet can be divided into several general steps which include *planning, development and distribution*.

Note: A checklist which summarizes these major steps is on page G-12.

PLANNING THE FACT SHEET

G.2.2.1 <u>Planning by asking questions</u>

Before writing a fact sheet, answer the following questions to help guide your effort:

- What do readers need to know and remember? Why?
- Who is the audience for the fact sheet?
- Why should the audience read the fact sheet?
- Do you want the audience to *do* something, or *provide* something to you?
- Is the information "time-sensitive"? If so, how will this influence the way in which you distribute the fact sheet?

G.2.2.2 <u>Identifying the message</u>

What are the one or two *main* points that you need to communicate to the reader? These could include site findings or results, a program milestone, beginning of field work, a comment period or other opportunity for the public to provide input about the project, a public meeting, or a major change in the program. The points you identify become the focus of the fact sheet.

Besides the issues important to project staff, what issues are important to the audience? Consider acknowledging and addressing them; otherwise, the fact sheet may deter readers who will conclude that the material is irrelevant to their concerns.

In addition to the few key points you wish to emphasize, a site fact sheet always should describe

- the site's history and why it is being investigated or remediated;
- upcoming citizen participation opportunities;
- the site's document repository; and
- staff contacts and ways for readers to obtain additional information.

G.2.2.3 <u>Defining the audience</u>

Determine who in the affected/interested community should receive the fact sheet. Part or all of the contact list? Specific categories of people such as adjacent residents or local officials? The information contained in the fact sheet helps to identify appropriate recipients.

G.2.2.4 <u>Distribution and logistics</u>

Determine how to get the fact sheet into the hands of the people who need to read it. A fact sheet can be

- mailed to all or part of the site's contact list (see Appendix G.1 for a discussion about developing a site contact list);
- distributed at a public meeting or availability session;
- placed in document repositories; and
- provided to residents during door-to-door visits.

Note: The site's contact list, if you use it, must be complete and up-to-date. Be sure to include people who have attended site public meetings, or who have called or written letters about the site. Make any necessary changes based on recent local, regional or statewide elections.

During the planning stage, determine who will reproduce the fact sheet, generate labels, stuff envelopes and oversee mailing or other distribution.

G.2.2.5 <u>Allocating responsibilities</u>

While it is generally best to designate a point person with overall responsibility for the fact sheet, determine during planning who else needs to participate in writing, review or distribution. Be sure all necessary staff are informed and brought into the fact sheet development process in a timely way.

G.2.2.6 <u>Timing</u>

Does the fact sheet announce imminent remedial field work (major onsite sampling or an interim remedial action or remedial construction)? Is a major site document being made available for public review, has a public meeting been scheduled, or is a comment period about to begin?

These questions highlight cases in which timely distribution of the fact sheet is particularly important. In such situations, the fact sheet's value is twofold: a) it provides the public with information and b) invites the public's action before the important site activity begins. This means that you must build sufficient time into the fact sheet development schedule to ensure its distribution well ahead of time.

DEVELOPING THE FACT SHEET

G.2.2.7 Outline

Begin writing by constructing a skeletal summary of the information, from most to least important. If it is difficult to get started, the following suggestions may help jump start the process:

- Write a summary using the *Who, What, When, Where, How, Why* method. Then add facts and details. Don't worry about writing polished text at this point;
- Try writing a headline or a simple declarative sentence proclaiming the most important fact you want to convey to the reader. For example: "State to Begin Cleanup of Hazardous Waste Contamination at Chem-Spill Site." Then begin hanging important facts on the sentence, regardless of the order in which they will ultimately appear in the text.

G.2.2.8 Selecting a format

Write clearly and concisely. Wherever possible, avoid jargon and acronyms; if they are essential to your explanation, define them clearly. This is especially important if you, for example, incorporate a test from a technical report written for specialists into a fact sheet intended for a general audience.

G.2.2.9 Capturing the reader's attention

The fact sheet must compete with all the other mail that readers have to wade through every day. Assume there are only a few seconds available to attract and hold a reader's attention to the message. Here are a few ways to do it:

- Grab the reader's attention with an informative headline.
- The lead paragraph (or at the very least the first page) of the fact sheet should contain the essence of what readers most need to know. This will help to ensure that even the most casual reader will capture the essentials of your message, even if he or she fails to turn the page or "recycles" the fact sheet after reading just the opening paragraph.
- Condense important information to essentials. If more detail is necessary, guide the reader to additional information within the fact sheet, but do not begin with background or historical information; such information, although useful, should never be the most important news for your reader. The fact sheet should lead with the most important piece of information that readers should know.
- Maps and graphics improve and increase reader understanding. The fact sheet should include a site map to help readers pinpoint the site's location, especially those who are not nearby residents. Can a simplified schematic diagram to depict the remedial technology you may be discussing be included?

G.2.2.10 Reviewing and rewriting

Make the material concise, accurate and readable, taking care to include information that should be part of every fact sheet: ways to obtain additional information, public involvement opportunities and repository information. Delete information that does not contribute to the reader's knowledge or understanding included.

Note: Staff who contributed information to the fact sheet, or who wrote portions of the fact sheet, or whose program responsibilities are described in the fact sheet, should be encouraged to review the draft before it is finalized. This includes staff from other agencies. Build enough time into the development schedule not only for reviewing and commenting, but also for incorporating important comments into the draft.

It helps to have someone not familiar with the site read the draft fact sheet for clarity and understanding. An "outsider" can provide a fresh perspective.

DISTRIBUTING THE FACT SHEET

Distribution involves the following: *who* will handle logistics, *how* distribution is conducted and *timing*.

G.2.2.11 Determining who does what

Who will handle photocopying, envelope stuffing and mailing or other distribution? Who will develop mailing labels? Don't leave these decisions until the last minute, especially if the fact sheet contains time-sensitive information. Decide during the planning stage.

G.2.2.12 Selecting method of distribution

Will all or part of the site contact list be used? If so, be sure it is up to date. Have the names from the most recent public meeting sign-in sheets been added? Did officials change after the last election?

Alternatives to mailing the fact sheet include the following: dispensing at public meetings and availability sessions, distributing during door-to-door visits, and inserting in another mailing.

G.2.2.13 Timing

The information contained in the fact sheet is time-sensitive if it announces the following:

- an upcoming public meeting (people should receive the fact sheet two weeks before the meeting so they can clear their calendars and avoid conflicts with other events);
- the start and end dates of an upcoming public comment period (the public should receive the fact sheet *before* the comment period begins; otherwise a 30-day comment period becomes, in reality, a 25-day comment period);
- imminent field investigation or construction work (e.g., workers in protective gear in the field, or a street closed or full of traffic, or the water supply to be shut off); and
- availability of an important site document for public comment, or that staff will discuss at an upcoming public meeting (people need to know in a timely way, for example, that the document is at the repository, or that it will be the focus of the public meeting).

Sufficient time should be allowed in the development and review schedule to ensure that the fact sheet is distributed, *and that it is received*, before the critical activity takes place.

G.2.3 Benefits and Limitations

- A fact sheet can effectively summarize important facts about a site's remedial program. It can also invite the public's participation in the site's decision-making process. A fact sheet often can be developed relatively quickly and distributed to a specific audience.

- Information can be provided directly to the audience without having to rely on coverage by local news media. Though local media should always be included in the intended readership, they may use some, all or none of the information contained in the fact sheet.

- A fact sheet can supplement or emphasize information provided at meetings and other forums, or can be used as a follow-up to other activities.

- When sent to the affected community throughout a site's remedial process, fact sheets can help a community stay informed and involved and demonstrate the state's commitment to public involvement.

- Sometimes a fact sheet can take significant time to plan and develop. It often requires careful coordination among staff.

- Instead of increasing public understanding, a poorly written fact sheet may mislead and confuse. Unless the fact sheet's message is clear and immediately apparent, the reader may quickly lose interest.

- If the fact sheet does not acknowledge issues which are important to the community, readers may dismiss the information as irrelevant.

- It may be difficult to determine, short of polling the audience, how many of the read the fact sheet, and how much information they retain. The fact sheet must compete with a lot of other mail for the attention of people who have limited free time to read.

Checklist to Plan, Develop and Distribute a Fact Sheet

- ❑ Determine purpose and message of fact sheet
- ❑ Identify audience and recipients
- ❑ Determine method of distribution
    - ❑ Update contact list (if mailing)
- ❑ Develop schedule for development and distribution
- ❑ Develop outline of fact sheet
    - ❑ Coordinate with project staff
    - ❑ Collect information
    - ❑ Assemble appropriate graphics
- ❑ Write draft fact sheet. Incorporate information and graphics.
- ❑ Coordinate project staff review
- ❑ Arrange reproduction of fact sheet in appropriate quantity
- ❑ Distribute fact sheet
    - ❑ Generate mailing labels, stuff envelopes and mail **and/or**
    - ❑ Insert fact sheet in separate mailing **and/or**
    - ❑ Distribute at public meeting or availability session **and/or**
    - ❑ Hand out during door-to-door visits **and**
    - ❑ Mail to document repository(ies)
- ❑ If fact sheet contains "time-sensitive" information about field work, a comment period, release of project document or other upcoming activity, ensure distribution before the start of the activity.

G.3 Public Meeting

G.3.1 Description

A public meeting brings together project staff with affected and interested citizens. Staff generally present information and answer questions, while citizens are encouraged to ask questions and provide comments.

A public meeting usually is held at a milestone in a site's remedial program, or to describe progress during a lengthy remedial stage. The meeting generally has a well-defined structure, spelled out in a formal agenda. Discrete time periods generally are defined for presentations, questions and answers, and public comment.

A public meeting helps

- ensure that important information about a site's remedial program is delivered in a consistent way to a large audience;
- identify issues and concerns important to the affected/interested community;
- ask the community for information about site history and conditions before beginning major investigation activity;
- gather public comment about a specific issue; and
- demonstrate to an emotionally-charged community that environmental officials are accessible and accountable. In such cases a public meeting should be supplemented with other outreach activities designed to help work through emotion and contribute to problem-solving. A meeting should *not* be held simply to encourage the public to vent.

G.3.2 Suggestions for Planning and Conducting a Public Meeting

Note: A checklist that summarizes major steps to plan and conduct a public meeting is on page G-19.

G.3.2.1 <u>Identifying the need for a public meeting</u>

- Define the status of the site's overall remedial and decision making process;
- Identify, in specific terms, the needs of the project staff and the community regarding information and involvement. How do those needs relate to the site's overall remedial process? Define objectives to meet those needs.
- Is a public meeting required at this point in the site's remedial process, or is it being considered as an optional activity to supplement the public outreach effort?
- Have other kinds of outreach activities been reviewed to determine whether any of them could more effectively accomplish the objectives?

If it is determined that a public meeting is required or appropriate at this time, proceed with organizing the meeting.

G.3.2.2 <u>Objectives and participants</u>

Public meetings often are conducted because of a remedial milestone or to report progress during a lengthy remedial stage. Answers to questions such as the following will help to define the goals and objectives of the meeting:

- What must be accomplished at the meeting?
- What important information must be given to or gathered from attendees? Ideally, who should these attendees be?

- What issues, questions and concerns are attendees likely to raise, whether or not related to the issues and information the project staff will discuss?

Identify program staff who have appropriate expertise and knowledge to provide the information identified and to address public comments and questions. At a minimum, staff should participate who have the program responsibilities for the remedial activities that will be the focus of the meeting.

G.3.2.3 Framework and format

Project staff should develop an agenda based on the goals of the meeting. The agenda should identify presentations to be made to the audience, the major points and the presenters. Develop handouts and other necessary supporting materials; at a minimum, these should include the agenda or a summary of the main points to be discussed, as well as a fact sheet.

Other useful supporting materials include slides and overheads (transparencies), maps and charts, cutaway sketches, blueprints, photographs, tools and instruments and even samples of liner material or other remedial equipment.

Be sure each participating staff person understands which items they are responsible for, as well as the timetable for their development.

Although slides and overheads are useful support tools, they should not overwhelm the presentation. A few suggestions:

- Use only as many slides or overheads as necessary. An AV extravaganza usually detracts from your message — the audience can be worn out, confused or overwhelmed by a myriad of charts, graphs and tables.
- Focus the message. Each slide and overhead should deal with one idea or concept. Use key words, phrases, illustrations. Avoid undefined acronyms and technical language. Avoid the temptation to pull an entire page of text or an elaborate chart of sampling results from a technical report and throw it onto a screen. Extract the most significant statistics onto a simple overhead. Every second your audience must wade through a detailed overhead is a second spent not listening to you.
- Use large size typeface. People in the back of the room need to be able to read the material.
- Consider providing attendees with paper copies of your overheads, so they can follow along from their seats.
- After you're through with a slide or overhead, turn off the projector, or remove or cover the image. Otherwise, the audience will be distracted by the image long after you have moved on to new material.

G.3.2.4 Eliciting input

The agenda should describe the methods to be used to gather public input, whether at the meeting itself or as part of a public comment period. Furthermore, the agenda should describe the kind of input desired, from comments about a proposal, to community issues and concerns, to information about a site's history or conditions.

G.3.2.5 Planning for the number of attendees

Consider the history of public involvement related to the site. How many people are affected by or interested in the issues you will discuss at the meeting? How many people have turned out for previous sessions? If this is the site's first public meeting, you can try to gauge public interest through other means, including media coverage, letters and phone calls to project staff, and political interest at the local or state level.

G.3.2.6 Selecting a date, time and place

Choose a location, date and time conducive to public attendance. Check with the municipal clerk and school officials to be sure your public meeting does not conflict with other meetings that could draw members of the community away.

The location should be an easily accessible building familiar to residents, such as a municipal hall, school, fire station or library. Local residents and officials can usually suggest an appropriate venue. Because locations may vary greatly in size, it is important to estimate attendance. It is better to overestimate when in doubt.

The facility should be accessible to people with disabilities. If you expect that most attendees will drive to the public meeting, there should be adequate parking. If the public meeting is being held in a large urban area, the facility should be reachable via public transportation.

Follow up on the arrangements made with a letter to the facility contact person, confirming the date and time of the meeting, and the subject of the session.

G.3.2.7 Publicity

Notify the community at least two weeks before the date of the public meeting. This allows interested people to clear their calendars and avoid conflicts with other events.

The public meeting may be publicized in many ways. Examples include the following:

- send a fact sheet or meeting announcement to part or all of the site contact list (be sure the contact list is up-to-date). Include the meeting agenda as well as highlights of the proposal or issues to be discussed. This is important because, even if people do not attend, they will receive information you want them to know.
- send a media release or a fact sheet to local newspapers and radio stations;
- telephone key individuals, organizations and officials;
- post notices at highly visible points in the community; and
- announce the upcoming public meeting at another forum, such as a town council or school board meeting.

Regardless of the methods you choose, emphasize the reasons for the meeting, the agenda, and the importance of public participation.

G.3.2.8 Coordinating with staff

Coordinate with participating staff before the public meeting to ensure that everyone understands the agenda and how the meeting will be conducted. Be sure that participating staff have developed their presentations and support materials.

Staff should try to rehearse their presentations ahead of time; they can benefit from a constructive critique about content and style. It is also useful to brainstorm questions and comments you are likely to hear at the public meeting, and to assess who is most qualified to address a particular question or issue, and whether there is sufficient information for a response. Remember to consider questions staff may want to ask the public.

G.3.2.9 Packing up and heading out

Remember the materials you will need for the meeting, such as

- fact sheets, agendas and other handouts (e.g., remedial program brochures);
- sign-in materials;
- directional signs;
- tape, pens, markers;
- support materials (slides, overheads, maps, charts, blueprints);
- equipment (slide projector, overhead projector, projection screen, tape recorder, flip chart stand and pad);
- extra projector bulbs; and
- extension cords (the nearest outlet may be 50 feet away).

G.3.2.10 Preparing the location

Arrive well ahead of time in order to get ready for the meeting:

- place directional signs as needed;
- establish a place for sign-in sheets and handout materials. Be sure that people sign in as they arrive, and use the information to update the site's contact list;
- set up equipment and support materials, such as projector or overhead, screen, flipchart, maps, tape recorder and other items; and
- set up podiums or platforms for speakers — move chairs and tables for presenters and audience as appropriate.

Try to greet people as they arrive, and introduce staff participants. A few pleasant words of greeting can help to set at ease those who may be uncomfortable in a public forum. Establish a climate that enables constructive communication.

G.3.2.11 Taking notes

A staff person who is not making a presentation should be selected ahead of time to take detailed notes of the meeting. Other staff should take notes as time and their responsibilities allow. Good notes help staff keep track of the public's questions and comments, as well as items for follow-up.

G.3.2.12 Beginning the meeting

Begin the meeting by welcoming the audience, and thanking them for taking the time to attend. Tell them about the purpose of the meeting and why it is important. Review the agenda with the audience (everyone should have a copy). State the ground rules up front and in simple terms.

G.3.2.13 Presenting information

In order to allow time for audience participation, especially questions and answers (Q & A), try to keep presentations as short as is possible. Be sure everyone can see the slides or overheads, and encourage people to move closer if they cannot.

G.3.2.14 Encouraging feedback

Adhering to the ground rules, facilitate public comments and questions during, between or after presentations. Everyone who wants to speak should have the opportunity. Be sure to ask if anyone has written comments.

Here are some tips for working effectively with the audience. Two dynamics operate at a public meeting: a) the issues and information to be exchanged; and b) the relationship between staff and audience brought to, or forged at, the meeting. The quality of the second dynamic, the relationship, usually rules the day. The importance of the information, or the craftsmanship of your presentations, will not matter if

- the prior relationship with the public has been non-productive or non-existent;
- the public distrusts the sincerity of project staff, or their motives;
- the public doubts the ability of project staff to address issues that concern them; or
- the public brings a different agenda to the meeting, or tries to obstruct the process.

It is impossible, within the confines of a single meeting, to remedy a long-standing dysfunctional relationship with the public. However, a few steps can be taken to increase trust and improve communication:

- Write the public's questions and comments on a flip-chart. This is a simple graphic demonstration that you have heard what the audience has said.
- During Q & A restate each speaker's question or comment for the entire audience. This shows the speaker that he or she has been understood, and ensures that everyone at the meeting understands what will be responded to.
- Tell the audience how their comments and input will be considered and how their overall involvement fits in the site decision-making process.
- If someone in the audience monopolizes Q & A or the comment period to the exclusion of others, gently but firmly remind the audience of the ground rules they agreed to. If the person persists, sound out the audience; sometimes an audience is its own best enforcer.
- If the meeting becomes heated or emotional, staff may feel that they are being attacked personally. Remember that people sometimes feel the need to vent and speak their piece. They may have been living with the effects of a hazardous waste site for years; or they may perceive public agencies to be slow, uncaring or mysterious, especially if the meeting is their first contact with the agencies.
- If the answer to a question is not known, say so plainly and simply. Tell the speaker an answer will be obtained and relayed as soon as possible. Be sure to follow up back at the office!
- Always tell the audience where the site remedial process is headed: what the next steps are; when they will hear from staff again and what they can expect to be told; when the public will have another opportunity to provide input.
- If the audience is not asking questions or providing comments about the information provided or the proposal outlined, staff should have several questions ready to ask the audience. The questions should be designed to break the ice and stimulate useful discussion.
- Encourage attendees to contact staff whenever they have questions, concerns or ideas outside of the meeting. Provide contact names, telephone numbers and addresses.

G.3.2.15 After the meeting

Try to allot a few minutes after the meeting to speak informally with people who need detailed answers to questions, or who prefer to ask questions privately.

G.3.2.16 Debriefing and following up

Review the substance of the meeting with all participating staff. Follow up on the public's questions and requests for information, as well as any commitments staff made. Share information with staff involved with the project who did not participate. Consider following up with another fact sheet or a responsiveness summary, but do not limit the mailing only to those who attended the meeting. Update the site's contact list with the names on the sign-in sheet.

G.3.3 Benefits and Limitations

- Public meetings help to ensure that important site information and proposals are provided to the affected and interested public.

- Public meetings encourage direct contact and communication between the public and project decision makers.

- Public meetings help reveal issues important to the public, or elicit feedback and comments staff want about the site, the surrounding community, or staff's site efforts and proposals.

- Public meetings usually require extensive preparation time, staff and resources. Presentations and supporting materials need to be prepared. Logistics for planning, conducting and following-up a large meeting can be comprehensive and time-consuming.

- Some staff are uncomfortable making presentations before large audiences. Training and rehearsal can help to increase staff confidence and effectiveness.

- Limited personal interaction can take place at a large public meeting. The setting often is formal and impersonal. Some people are not comfortable speaking out at public meetings, so it is possible that a broad spectrum of public opinion may go unheard.

- The positions which attendees take from their real or underlying interests may be difficult to distinguish. Often people feel compelled to take firm stands, or to posture for their constituents, peers or the media.

- When staff determine that they need to reach out to the community, they often decide to conduct a large public meeting. However, many public outreach and information objectives can be achieved more effectively through activities other than large group meetings. Availability sessions, meetings targeted to specific groups or interests, and fact sheets often are effective ways to provide information or encourage public input.

Checklist to Plan and Conduct a Public Meeting

- ❑ Determine purpose (s) and subject(s): ______________________________
- ❑ Identify location for public meeting
  - ❑ Facility name & location: ______________________________
  - ❑ Contact person/phone number at facility: ______________________________
  - ❑ Accessibility
    - ❑ People with disabilities and
    - ❑ Adequate parking and/or
    - ❑ Convenient to public transportation
- ❑ Choose date and time of the public meeting: ______________________________
- ❑ Confirm arrangements with follow up letter to facility contact person
- ❑ Identify staff to participate in public meeting
- ❑ Scope information to be presented (agenda, presentations, etc.)
- ❑ Identify/prepare support materials (handouts, slides/transparencies)
- ❑ Publicize the upcoming public meeting
  - ❑ Send fact sheet to all/part of site contact list and/or
  - ❑ Send fact sheet and/or media release to local media and/or
  - ❑ Telephone key individuals, organizations, officials and/or
  - ❑ Post notices in the community and/or
  - ❑ Announce the upcoming public meeting in another forum
- ❑ Hold staff pre-meeting to finalize content and coordination
- ❑ Conduct the public meeting
  - ❑ Bring and use signs, sign-in sheets and support materials
  - ❑ Collect/record comments and questions for program use or follow-up
- ❑ Follow up activities to the public meeting
  - ❑ Provide necessary follow-up to public questions/comments
  - ❑ Update contact list with sign-in sheets
  - ❑ Consider additional follow up

G.4 Availability Session

G.4.1 Description

An availability session is a scheduled gathering of project staff with the affected/interested public. The session is held in a casual setting, without a formal agenda or presentations. Staff generally conduct an availability session about a specific aspect of a site's remedial program, which it publicizes ahead of time. The format promotes detailed individual or small group discussion between staff and the public.

An availability session is an appropriate tool

- to provide information to, and address the concerns of, the affected community about specific aspects of a site's remedial program. For example, if remedial construction is about to begin, staff may wish to discuss with community members the general construction schedule, specific on-site activities, and the effects of remedial activity on the local community, such as road closures, truck traffic, dust and noise;
- to supplement a formal public meeting or other outreach activity by providing interested members of the public additional opportunity for individual, detailed discussions about the site's remediation;
- when larger crowds would discourage certain members of the public from engaging project staff or asking questions; or
- when staff do not have time or resources needed to plan and conduct a formal, large group public meeting.

G.4.2 Suggestions for Planning and Conducting an Availability Session

Note: A checklist that summarizes major steps to plan and conduct an availability session is on page G-24.

G.4.2.1 <u>Determining the focus of the session</u>

Define the focus of the availability session. What must be communicated? What questions and concerns are attendees likely to raise? Identify project staff who have information needed to prepare for the availability session. Determine which project staff should participate in the session. At a minimum, project staff should attend who have responsibility for the activity that will be the focus of the session.

Availability sessions generally require fewer project staff to participate than at a formal public meeting. At a minimum, however, at least two staff should participate at the availability session. To help determine the appropriate number of staff participants, consider the kind of information likely to be discussed, the estimated number of public attendees, and available staff resources.

G.4.2.2 <u>Planning for the number of attendees</u>

Depending on the number of people expected to attend, two sessions may be appropriate: one in the afternoon and one in the evening. If only one session is possible, extend the evening hours or bring additional staff. The availability session is designed to foster individual and small-group discussion. Try to ensure that attendees talk to staff with minimal waiting, and that staff will talk to small groups.

G.4.2.3 Selecting a date, time and location

Choose a location, date and time that encourage attendance. An evening session will accommodate people who work during normal business hours. Check with the municipal clerk and school officials to be sure the session does not conflict with other meetings that could draw members of the community away.

The location should be in an easily accessible building familiar to residents, such as a library, municipal hall, school, fire hall or local meeting room. Local residents and officials can usually suggest an appropriate venue. Because an availability session generally involves a small number of people, there is more flexibility in choosing a location than for a large, formal public meeting.

The facility should be accessible to citizens with disabilities. If it is expected that most attendees will drive to the availability session, there should be adequate parking. If the availability session is being held in a large urban area, the facility should be reachable via public transportation.

Follow up on the arrangements with a letter to the facility contact person, confirming the date, time and subject of the session.

G.4.2.4 Supporting materials

Many materials may be suitable for an availability session: maps, schematic drawings, cutaway sketches, blueprints, photographs of the pertinent remedial technology, tools and instruments, documents, sampling results — even pieces of synthetic liner material or filter fabric. All can potentially be used to help answer the public's questions and to focus discussion.

It is generally appropriate to develop a fact sheet that covers the essential points of the discussion for distribution at the availability session.

G.4.2.5 Publicity

Notify the community at least two weeks before the date of the availability session. This allows interested people to clear their calendars and avoid conflicts with other events.

The session may be publicized in many ways. Examples include the following:

- send a fact sheet or session announcement to part or all of the site contact list (be sure the contact list is up-to-date). Include the agenda as well as highlights of the proposal or issues to be discussed. This is important because, even if people do not attend, they will receive information you want them to know.
- send a media release or a fact sheet to local newspapers and radio stations;
- telephone key individuals, organizations and officials;
- post notices at highly visible points in the community; and
- announce the upcoming session at another forum, such as a town council or school board meeting.

Regardless of the methods you choose, emphasize the reasons for the session, the agenda, and the importance of public participation.

When explaining the format of an availability session, emphasize how it differs from a public meeting:

- project staff will be available for a specific time period to answer questions, address concerns and discuss aspects of the site's remediation with individuals or small groups;
- there is no set agenda or formal presentations; and
- the public can drop by anytime during the availability session.

G.4.2.6 <u>Coordinating with staff</u>

Coordinate with participating staff before the availability session to ensure that everyone understands the topics for discussion and how the session will be conducted. Be sure that staff have developed and reviewed their support materials.

G.4.2.7 <u>Conducting the availability session</u>

Arrive well ahead of time in order to get ready for the meeting:

- place directional signs as needed;
- establish a place for sign-in sheets and handout materials. Be sure that people sign in as they arrive, and use the information to update the site's contact list; and
- set up all supporting materials.

Try to greet people as they arrive, and introduce staff participants. A few pleasant words of greeting can help to set at ease those who may be uncomfortable in a public forum. Establish a climate that enables constructive communication.

Connect people with particular questions or comments and staff with the appropriate expertise. Note comments and questions that require follow-up by project staff.

G.4.2.8 <u>Debriefing and following up</u>

Review the substance of the session with all participating staff. Follow up on the public's questions and requests for information, as well as any commitments staff made. Share information with staff involved with the project who did not participate. Consider following up with another fact sheet or a responsiveness summary, but do not limit the mailing only to those who attended the session. Update the site's contact list with the names on the sign-in sheet.

G.4.3 Benefits and Limitations

- A face-to-face discussion is perhaps the most efficacious form of public outreach. It encourages an exchange of information with people directly affected by site contamination, investigation activities, or remediation. The individual and small-group dialogue can help build mutual credibility between the affected community and project staff —credibility that is more difficult to achieve in other settings.

- Availability sessions stretch limited program resources. They do not require prepared presentations and are significantly faster, easier and less resource-intensive to plan and conduct than formal public meetings.

- Quicker and easier planning and implementation create flexibility to conduct an availability session in locations and for reasons that other public outreach activities could not accommodate.

- An availability session often attracts a small audience, but attendees usually bring intense rather than casual interest in a site's remediation. This heightened interest and modest attendance actually enhances direct dialogue between the public and project staff.

- When held within a day or two of a formal public meeting, an availability session can offer the public an additional forum to interact with project staff. As a result, people attending the formal public meeting may not feel pressed to compete for limited opportunities for input in a forum that must accommodate formal presentations, a large audience, and many levels of interest and understanding.

- An availability session encourages those who might be intimidated or uncomfortable in a large group setting to talk to project staff in a more intimate setting.

- After the availability session, follow-up activities may require widely varying amounts of time and resources.

- Some community members may express suspicion that availability sessions are designed to divide and conquer the affected public, and prevent the community from demonstrating unity and resolve. In such circumstances consider using the availability session to supplement other outreach activities that promote interaction with the affected community.

Checklist to Plan and Conduct an Availability Session

- ❑ Determine purpose (s) and subject(s): ______________________
- ❑ Identify location for availability session
    - ❑ Facility name & location: ______________________
    - ❑ Contact person/phone number at facility: ______________________
    - ❑ Accessibility
        - ❑ People with disabilities and
        - ❑ Adequate parking and/or
        - ❑ Convenient to public transportation
- ❑ Choose date and time of the availability session: ______________________
- ❑ Confirm arrangements with follow up letter to facility contact person
- ❑ Identify staff to participate in public meeting
- ❑ Review information to be discussed with the public
- ❑ Identify/prepare support materials (maps, blueprints, handouts, etc.)
- ❑ Publicize the upcoming public meeting
    - ❑ Send fact sheet to all/part of site contact list and/or
    - ❑ Send fact sheet and/or media release to local media and/or
    - ❑ Telephone key individuals, organizations, officials and/or
    - ❑ Post notices in the community and/or
    - ❑ Announce the upcoming public meeting in another forum
- ❑ Conduct the availability session
    - ❑ Bring and use signs, sign-in sheets and support materials
    - ❑ Record comments and questions for program use or follow-up
- ❑ Follow up activities to the availability session
    - ❑ Provide necessary follow-up to public questions/comments
    - ❑ Update contact list with sign-in sheets
    - ❑ Consider additional follow up

G.5 Toll-free "800" Numbers

G.5.1 Description

Toll-free information numbers are a convenient means for people with questions, comments or concerns about a hazardous waste site to obtain information, particularly those who cannot or will not participate in other outreach activities. In addition to building credibility with the public, toll-free numbers can address minor problems and concerns before they escalate into larger ones that demand greater expenditures of time and resources.

G.5.2 Suggestions for Using Toll-free "800" Numbers

G.5.2.1 Publicizing "800" numbers

Use fact sheets, media releases, public meetings, availability sessions, letters and other public contact information to announce the project's toll-free number(s). Encourage interested people to use the toll-free number(s) to contact project staff with questions or concerns at any time during the remedial process.

Publicize the NYSDEC (for central office-lead sites) and NYSDOH toll-free numbers for site-related and health-related questions, concerns and comments:

NYSDEC	NYSDOH
Division of Environmental Remediation Toll-free Information Line 1-800-342-9296	Bureau of Environmental Exposure Investigation Toll-free Information Line 1-800-458-1158, ext. 27850

NOTE: "800" numbers are typically information lines — not a "hotline" — because weeknight and weekend callers may not receive immediate responses. Avoid public misunderstanding: identify the number as an "information-only" line when it is publicized.

G.5.2.2 Managing toll-free number(s)

Whenever the "800" numbers are publicized in a fact sheet, meeting announcement or newsletter, be sure that a copy of the material has been provided to staff managing to "800" numbers. This helps to prevent staff from being blindsided: with the publicity material site in hand, they can often answer calls directly, or immediately know to which staff members to forward calls.

G.5.2.3 Following up

It may be appropriate to follow up a toll-free call by sending a letter or other written material to satisfy a caller's more detailed questions.

G.5.2.4 Involving project staff

To provide a complete answer to a caller's questions or information requests, all appropriate staff should be involved in reviewing the response.

G.5.2.5 Sharing information

As appropriate, be sure to share with other staff involved with the site the questions and concerns being received from the toll-free number(s). This information may assist other staff as they communicate with the public about the site.

G.5.3 Benefits and Limitations

- Can be an effective way to interact with many people to gather comments and answer questions.

- Helps to build and maintain credibility by improving public access to project staff and information.

- Timely response to calls is important. Delayed or inadequate response can damage credibility and increase public frustration or cynicism.

- Despite all the best efforts, some people may believe the toll-free information number is a "hotline" and may expect immediate response.

- The NYSDEC toll-free number can only be called from within New York State, so care should be used when publicizing it at a site that may border an adjacent state or Canada.

G.6 Door-to-door Visits

G.6.1 Description

Door-to-door visits involve gathering or distributing site information by meeting individuals at their residences or businesses. Project staff visit residents near a site to provide information, answer questions or obtain permissions for activities on private properties.

Door-to-door visits may be appropriate when

- on-site investigation or remediation activity is imminent, and there is not enough time for mailings or public meetings (for example, an impending emergency removal action or a time-sensitive interim remedial measure);
- there is a need to reach a particular group of people for a particular purpose, such as obtaining signatures to allow access to properties near the site;
- public concern about site contamination or other site-related issues is extremely high; and
- personal contact could effectively supplement other outreach efforts.

G.6.2 Suggestions for Conducting Door-to-door Visits

Door-to-door visits require specialized techniques applied within well-defined circumstances, such as those listed above. When planned and conducted properly, visits can be extremely effective in reaching their designated audience.

G.6.2.1 <u>Preparation</u>

Identify as specifically as possible the information that needs to be provided or gathered. What site issues or activities are driving these needs? Establish the time-frame for the visits, especially when there a deadline. Be sure that door-to-door visits are the appropriate method of outreach.

G.6.2.2 <u>Identifying the area and audience</u>

Determine the residences and businesses that need to be visited (this is influenced largely by the site issues or activities and whom they affect). Be sure that there are sufficient staff and resources to cover the designated area.

G.6.2.3 <u>Planning with project staff</u>

Defining the information that needs to be provided or gathered will indicate which remedial, health or consultant staff should participate in the door-to-door visits. If these staff are unavailable, they should still help plan the visits and brief other staff with answers to anticipated questions.

Be sure all participating staff clearly understand the information to be discussed with the public, so that they provide consistent, accurate information throughout the area to be visited.

G.6.2.4 <u>Reviewing the message</u>

The information provided or gathered during door-to-door visits should be

- specific — pertinent to a particular issue or activity of the site;
- timely —involving a situation or activity soon to occur or which has already begun; and
- clear — staff must know what is needed from the residents, while residents must understand what staff need to tell them.

G.6.2.5 Written summaries

Develop a written summary (essentially a short fact sheet) that encapsulates the information to be provided or requested during the door-to-door visits. Distribute this summary to the occupants, even when no one is present.

Be sure the written material meets the standards of specificity, timeliness, and clarity, and lists ways for residents to contact staff with questions or comments.

G.6.2.6 Conducting the visits

Allow sufficient time to cover the designated area and to account for lengthy discussions that may occur. Staff should always

- wear or carry identification;
- tell residents why they are conducting the visits;
- present and request information consistently at all addresses called upon;
- distribute the written summary at all addresses visited;
- note all information provided by residents;
- note areas covered; and
- note names and addresses of people who have requested additional information.

Based on the particulars of the site and the area being visited, it may be advisable for staff to pair up when conducting visits. This will help to ensure that staff with varied expertise are available to answer a range of questions.

G.6.2.7 Following up

Staff participants should meet after the visits to discuss their experiences and compare notes. Be sure to respond promptly to requests for information that was not provided during the visits. Consider sending a follow-up letter or fact sheet to all residents in the designated area.

G.6.3 Benefits and Limitations

- Project staff can meet directly with the people that they need to communicate with about specific issues or activities.

- Door-to-door visits help to distribute information quickly, when time is of the essence and when other activities such as mailing cannot accomplish the task during the identified time-frame.

- Door-to-door visits demonstrate a commitment to the community when other, less direct outreach seems insufficient to deal with community concerns effectively.

- Despite best intentions, door-to-door visits can foster unfavorable cliches (e.g., "We're from the government and we're here to help.")

- Door-to-door visits can be time-consuming. In addition, some project staff may not be comfortable with the technique or have appropriate training to conduct the activity effectively. As a result, the technique should be used only if other outreach cannot be used or will likely be ineffectual.

- If there are concerns for the safety and security of staff, even more resources may be required to conduct visits than usual.

G.7 Document Repository

G.7.1 Description

A document repository is a collection of documents and other information developed during the investigation and remediation of a waste site. It is located in a convenient public facility, such as a library, so that interested members of the public can easily access and review important information about the site and the site's remedial program. A repository is maintained through the site's operation and maintenance phase, or until its release from the applicable remedial program.

A site document repository is helps the public review

- documents about which the state is seeking public comment;
- studies, reports and other information;
- complete versions of documents summarized in fact sheets, meeting presentations or media releases (summaries should note the location(s) of a local repository where the complete documents are available).

G.7.2 Suggestions for Establishing a Document Repository

The appropriate regional NYSDEC office often generates or receives documents developed during a site's investigation and remediation. However, most people don't live near a regional office. The selection of a local repository becomes very important.

G.7.2.1 Determining the location

The repository should be located near the site and the affected and interested community. Residents, municipal clerks, local officials and school officials can to help identify a suitable location.

If possible, a location should be selected to can accommodate people who work during normal business hours. In addition, the availability of public transportation in locations where parking or automobile travel is inconvenient should be considered. Access for disabled people and the availability of photocopying should be determined.

A local public library usually is a suitable location. Alternatives include municipal offices, public health offices and schools.

G.7.2.2 Contact the potential repository

Be sure to contact the potential repository *before* sending documents. Most librarians and municipal clerks are more than willing to help make documents available to the public. They don't appreciate receiving a box full of reports with an explanatory letter out of the blue.

When calling a library, the reference librarian is a good first contact. Explain that you would like to have site program documents maintained in an accessible spot for public review and copying. Because space may be limited, the librarian may ask for an estimate of the total volume of documents you will be sending over a given time.

Follow up the conversation with a courtesy letter confirming the agreed-upon terms and conditions for the repository. Be sure to restate your understanding of who the repository contact person will be and where the documents will be maintained.

G.7.2.3 Depositing documents and other information

Send studies, reports, information sheets and other suitable materials to the repository. Consider providing several copies of documents that are likely to be of great interest to the public.

G.7.2.4 Accommodating the repository host

When sending a document to the repository, transmit it with a cover letter that describes what the document is, why it was produced and which briefly summarizes its contents. This will help the host maintain an ordered file and will help the public locate documents of interest. For documents about which the state is seeking public comment, provide information about how the public is to comment, such as the length of the comment period, and where to send comments.

G.7.2.5 Publicizing the repository and its contents

It is important to remind the public about the repository as often as possible. Take advantage of the public contact tools you use during the public outreach program. Use fact sheets, media releases, public meetings, availability sessions, door-to-door visits, letters and telephone calls to tell people about the repository, its contents, and why public review is important. Provide the repository's location, days and hours of operation and the repository contact person.

G.7.2.6 Special consideration for time-sensitive documents

Some documents are placed in a repository for public review during a prescribed comment period. Be sure that documents for public comment are in the repository when the comment period starts. This affords the public maximum opportunity for review and comment.

G.7.2.7 Updating the repository

Send materials as soon as possible after they are developed. Remove/replace outdated materials. Provide finalized and revised versions of documents.

G.7.2.8 Consider providing additional copies of documents

As mentioned earlier, consider sending additional copies of documents to a repository when sustained public interest is anticipated. In addition, consider providing copies of appropriate documents to local officials, involved organizations and others who have demonstrated a keen interest in the site and its remedial program.

G.7.3 Benefits and Limitations

- A repository makes detailed, timely information available to residents, officials and others in the community affected by or interested in the site and the remedial program. In particular, the repository serves community members interested in additional details beyond summaries provided in fact sheets and public meeting presentations.

- A repository must be maintained to ensure timely availability of current information. It should be checked occasionally to ensure that materials are available.

- Even when a local repository is established to improve access to project information, most people do not read complete documents.

- A repository supports — but cannot substitute for — two-way communication between project staff and the community.